

In Answer.

MADAM, we miss the train at B—
 "But can't you make it, sir!" she gasped.
 "Impossible; it leaves at three.
 And we are due a quarter past."
 "Is there no way? O, tell me, then,
 Are you a Christian?" "I am not."
 "And are there none among the men
 Who run the train?" "No—I forgot—
 I think this fellow over here,
 Oiling the engine, claims to be."
 She threw upon the engineer
 A fair face, white with agony.

"Are you a Christian?" "Yes, I am."
 "Then, O sir, won't you pray with me,
 All the long way, that God will stay,
 That God will hold the train at B—!"
 "I will do no good, it leaves at three
 And"—"Yes, but God can hold the train;
 My dying child is calling me.
 And I must see her face again.
 O, won't you pray?" "I will," a nod
 Emphatic, as he takes his place.
 When Christians grasp the arm of God
 They grasp the power that rules the rod.

Out from the station swept the train
 On time, swept on past wood and lea;
 The engineer, with cheeks aflame,
 Prayed, "O Lord, hold the train at B—."
 Then flung the throttle wide, and like
 Some giant monster of the plain,
 With panting sides and mighty strides,
 Past hill and valley swept the train.

A half, a minute, two are gained;
 Along those burnished lines of steel
 His glance leap, each nerve is strained,
 And still he prays with fervent zeal.
 Heart, hand, and brain, with one accord,
 Work while his prayer ascends to Heaven,
 "Just hold the train eight minutes, Lord,
 And I'll make up the other seven."

With rush and roar through meadow lands,
 Past cottage homes and green hill-sides,
 The panting thing obeys his hand,
 And speeds along with giant strides.
 They say an accident delayed
 The train a little while; but He
 Who listened while his children prayed,
 In answer, held the train at B—.

—*Youth's Companion.*

Little Phil's Sermon.

WHEN teaching in Memphis, Tenn., I went to see some of our poorest poor in the barracks. There was old Philip, ninety-seven years old, sick and destitute, yet full of confidence in God. The old man suffered greatly, and had no comfortable bed to sleep on, and very little care. He seemed very patient, however, and it would have done you good to hear him talk. He said:

"Way down in Mississippi I found God when I was a boy of ten years. I never heard preachin', and knowed nothin' 'bout Jesus, but I was out in the woods a totin' wood for bakin', an' I heard a moanin' in the trees, an' it made me feel strange like; an' when I toted the wood in, I axed the woman the meanin'. She tole me, 'It's de Lord callin' ye. I wish 't was me. You must pray to God.' But I'd no one to tell me 'bout it, till the good ole blind man, Massa Jenkins, came from South Carolina a preachin' 'bout Jesus. Oh, how I loved him! He's been dead a great while, but I shall know him when I see him in heaven."

"Massa Jenkins done went away, but I kep' prayin' an' prayin' till I got so happy I didn't know myself, an' I dropped a whole armful of plates I was carryin' to the dinin' room, an' broke, I don't know how many; but I didn't stop for that, but cried: 'Bless Massa Jesus! glory, glory, hallelujah!' and all the people came runnin' to see what the matter of Philip."

"The next night July got religion while I was prayin' for him, and then we'd pray every night in the cabin, an' the ole folks gathered round us, an' Massa Malohi Murphy was awful

angry. He swore he would not have any prayin' on his plantation, and he used to whip me to take the 'ligion out o' me; sometimes he'd scold, and sometimes he'd make fun o' me, callin' me 'the preacher;' but it did not put me down. He tole me he'd build a pulpit in the yard, an' he'd give out the notice that little Phil was to be the big preacher, an' I'd got to preach. I knew he'd make me do it.

"I tole July we'd try an' get some Christian man to go in that pulpit and preach, if we could find one. We stole out at night on adjoining plantations, but could get no one; an' sure enough, there came a great crowd of people that filled all that great yard, an' there stood a great high pulpit, an' when the hour come, Massa Malohi sat in his big chair in the door, with his big Bible open, an' called me out like a little prisoner, tremblin' like a leaf, an' the sweat poured off me as I walked up step after step on that high pulpit.

"I got July to go an' sit with me; he was my age; but, oh! how I prayed God to be with me. I didn't know what to say. I could not think of anything but to pray God to help me.

"I thought I could sing—it 'peared like the Spirit of God came upon me, an' I grew strong after I got into the pulpit, an' it 'peared like I felt every word I sung, an' tears drippin' down my face. The people began to cry, an' before I got the hymn half sung through, a good many men an' women were on their knees cryin' for mercy.

"Massa Malohi got frightened, an' threw down his Bible, shut the door, an' jumped into bed an' lay between two feather beds all the balance of the day.

"I tell you the blessed Lord came an' preached for poor little Phil that day, for by the next mornin', thirty had experienced 'ligion, an' from that day I went on preachin' sure enough.

"God gave me holdin' out faith that lasted all my life to this day. A church of two hundred and thirty members was built up from those who, up to that day, had been wicked an' swearin' like Massa Malohi.

"I've begged an' prayed the Lord to take me out of misery; but He knows best. I knows in whom I've believed. Don't ever be afeared of ole Philip. I've toiled hard for my massa, but dey never comes nigh me now. The Lord never forsakes me. Sometimes He sends me a bit to eat, an' I've trustin' Him."

On the banks of a bayou, among inhabitants so vile that respectable persons scarcely venture there, lived poor Philip. Costly mansions looked down on the desolate barrack, and the white walls of St. Lazarus' College rise just beyond where this poor Lazarus waited for the promised inheritance, a joyful smile lighting up his countenance, furrowed with age and suffering, as he spoke of the "heavenly mansion" waiting for him in the "Father's House."—*Mary Hastings.*

There are some questions which are constantly reappearing in the Sunday-school field. No matter how many times we answer them, they will be propounded again, by a new correspondent, as if they had never been replied to. One of these questions is, Can a woman superintend a Sunday-school? Here it comes again; this time from an Ohio subscriber, who asks:

According to Paul, is it scriptural for a woman to superintend a Sunday-school? Please answer through your Notes on Open Letters. We don't remember that Paul said anything about Sunday-schools. But Paul lived for some time in the house of Philip the evangelist, who had four daughters who were in the habit of prophesying; and Paul doesn't seem to have made any complaint of their performances. If there had been any Sunday-schools in Casarea in that day, those daughters of Philip would have been very likely to have a hand in them. As to a woman's superintending a Sunday-school, the old-time standard is as good as any: "Ought a woman to superintend a Sunday-school?" "By all means, if she is the best man available for the place." That is the way we look at it. And we think that Paul would agree with us on this point.—*Sunday-School Times.*

Diamonds Worth Having.

A PRETTY story is told about the Princess Eugenie, sister of the king of Sweden. She recently sold her diamonds to raise funds in order to complete a hospital in which she is interested. When visiting the hospital, after its completion, a suffering inmate wept tears of gratitude as she stood by his side, and the princess exclaimed; "Ah, now I see my diamonds again!"

Were not those diamonds worth having? They didn't flash in the eyes of pleasure-loving men and women, but they must have sparkled with wonderful light as the Lord of Light looked down upon them!

The Meaning of the Text.

THE obvious meaning of a passage of Scripture, when taken in connection with its context, is usually the true meaning. Critical helps are not to be despised, but, as a rule, the plain meaning of the words as they stand in our English Bible is the true meaning, and the Sunday-school teacher will do well to first make a careful study of the text, without note or comment. Seek help only when it is necessary. When the meaning of the text has been gathered with satisfactory clearness and fulness, then study the best way of presenting it to the class. Here helps may be used, especially illustrations which may serve to simplify and enforce the teaching of the lesson. A lesson thus prepared will be fresh and full of life to teacher and pupil.—*S. S. Magazines.*

Union and Denominational.

THE importance of teaching the peculiar doctrines of our Church in our Sunday-schools is being more and more appreciated by our preachers and people. In most cases the union idea is found to work to our injury, and, so far as we can see, nobody is specially benefited by it. The "undenominational argument is about worn out," and we are glad of it. It never was sound, and has become a "hobby" with some persons, and a business scheme with others. Take the denominations out of the country, and there will be precious little Christianity left in it. "Union schools" are great conveniences to certain weak folk who want a base upon which to operate. This is about their only use. We trust our next General Conference will give emphasis to doctrinal teaching in our Sunday-

schools. We are well supplied with excellent catechisms and question-books, which ought to be in all our schools. These, with the current Bible lessons, furnish a complete outfit. We hope the day for "cheap alien literature" is past. Our Church is certainly able to take care of its own children, and it is bound to do so. If the parents at home, the pastors of our congregations, and teachers in our Sunday-schools, do their duty, the children of the Southern Methodist Church will be as well taught as any in the land.—*Sunday-School Magazine.*

Increase of Value.

A BAR of iron worth five dollars, worked into horseshoes, is worth ten dollars and fifty cents; made into needles, is worth three hundred and fifty-five dollars; made into penknife blades, is worth three thousand two hundred and eighty-five dollars; made into balance-springs of watches, is worth two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. What a drilling the poor bar must undergo to reach all that! but hammered and beaten and pounded and rolled and polished, how was its value increased! It might well have quivered and complained under the hard knocks it got; but they were all necessary to draw out its fine qualities, and fit it for higher offices. So, children, all the drilling and training which you are subject to in youth, and which often seem so hard to you, serve to bring out your nobler and finer qualities, and fit you for more responsible posts and greater usefulness in the world.

Brutus and His Sons.

How astonishing was the rigid justice of Brutus the Elder, who, in spite of all the passions of a father, passed sentence of death upon his own sons, for conspiring against the liberty of their country! While the amiable youths stood trembling and weeping before him, and hoping their tears would be the most powerful defense for the moderation of the punishment, and that they might escape with banishment; while the senate whisper for the moderation of the punishment, and that they might escape with banishment; while his fellow-consul is silent; while the multitude trembles, and expect the decision with horror—the inexorable Brutus rises, in all the stern majesty of justice, and turning to the lictors, who were the executioners, says to them, "To you, lictors, I deliver them." In this sentence he persisted inexorable, notwithstanding the weeping intercession of the multitude, and the cries of the young men, calling upon their father by the most endearing names. The lictors seized them, stripped them naked, bound their hands behind them, beat them with rods, and then struck off their heads; the inexorable Brutus looking on the bloody spectacle with unaltered countenance. Thus the father was lost in the judge; the love of justice overcame all the fondness of the parent; private interest was swallowed up in regard for the public good, and the honour and security of government. This, perhaps, is the most striking resemblance of the justice of Deity that can be found in the history of mankind. But how far short does it fall! How trifling were the sufferings of these youths compared with those of the Son of God! They, too, were criminals—He was holy, and free from sin. How insignificant the law and government for which they suffered to that of the Divine!